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DIGITAL EDITION

HAUNT™

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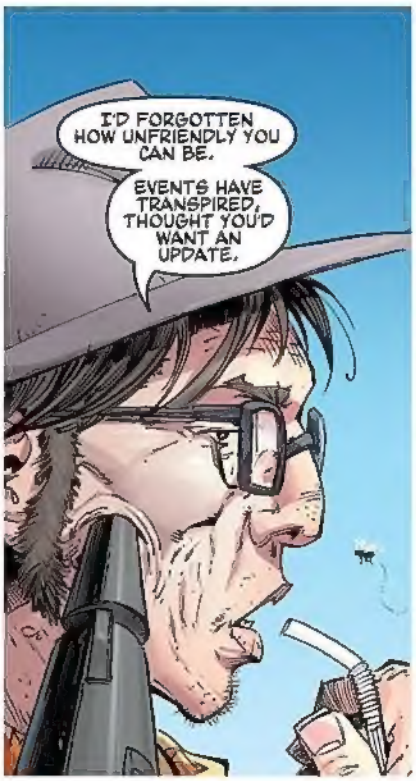
image

...
YAWN.
PSST.
WHAT?!

WHISPER?!
NEVER MIND HOW YOU FOUND ME. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE HAPPY TO SEE ME.
TALK!


I'D FORGOTTEN HOW UNFRIENDLY YOU CAN BE.
EVENTS HAVE TRANSPIRED, THOUGHT YOU'D WANT AN UPDATE.

MORGAN HAS BEEN KILLED. BETH TOSH HAS BEEN APPOINTED THE NEW HEAD OF THE AGENCY.
APPARENTLY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR RHODES WAS A MOLE FOR HURG'S ORGANIZATION... WHICH I'M SLOWLY LEARNING MORE ABOUT.

HERE'S THE REAL KICKER-- FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON, IT APPEARS THAT KURT'S BROTHER, DANIEL, HAS BEEN MADE A FULL AGENT. HE'S IN TRAINING RIGHT NOW.
DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO ME. I'LL DIG DEEPER.

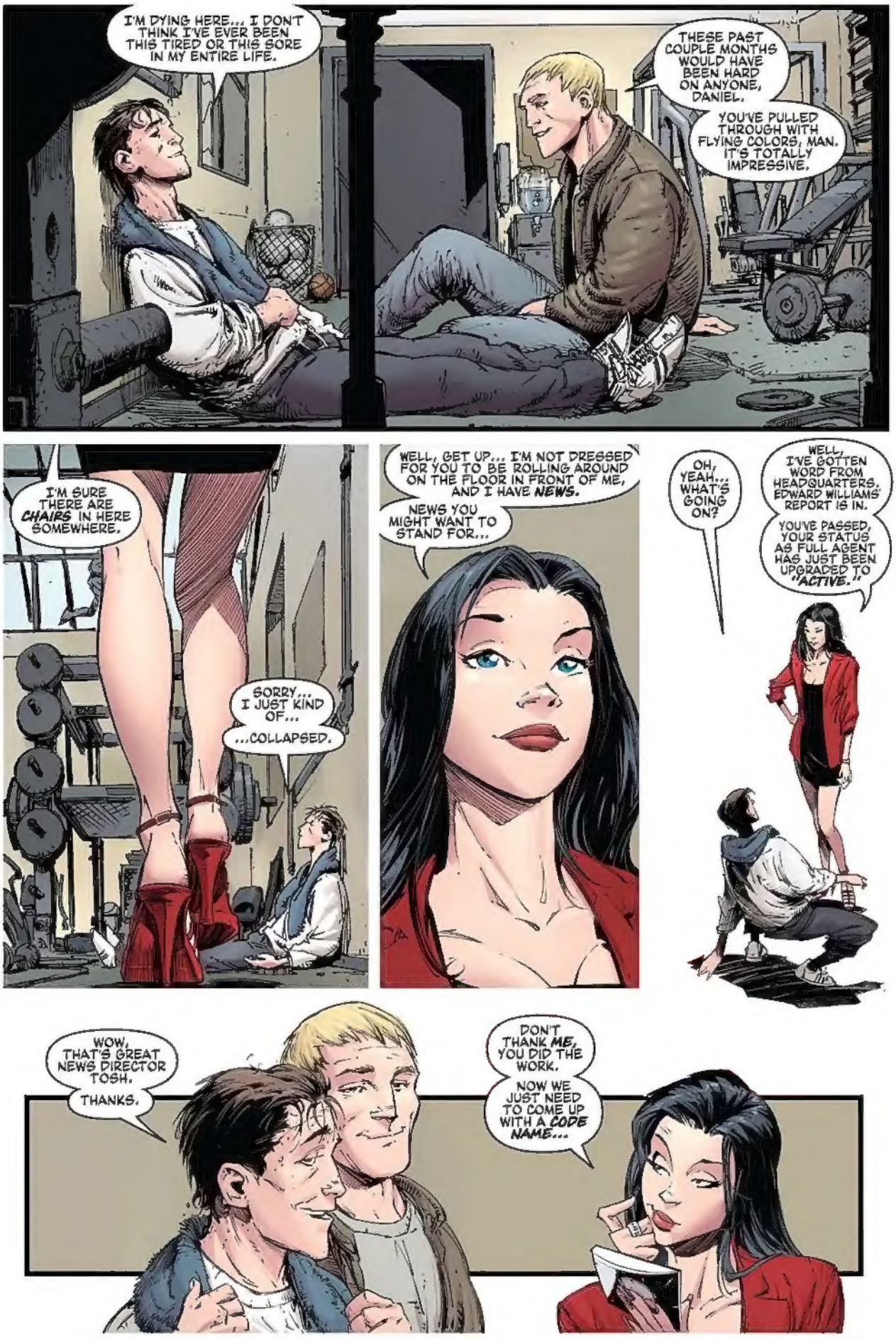
YOU FLEW ALL THE WAY DOWN HERE FOR THIS?
I'M DOWN HERE FOR OTHER THINGS... MADE THIS SHORT TRIP OVER FOR YOU. I LIKE THE SUN.
NOW CAN YOU TAKE THE GUN OUT OF MY FACE BEFORE SOMEONE NOTICES?
YOU AND I BOTH KNOW YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SHOOT ME.

ENJOY THE SUN, WHISPER.

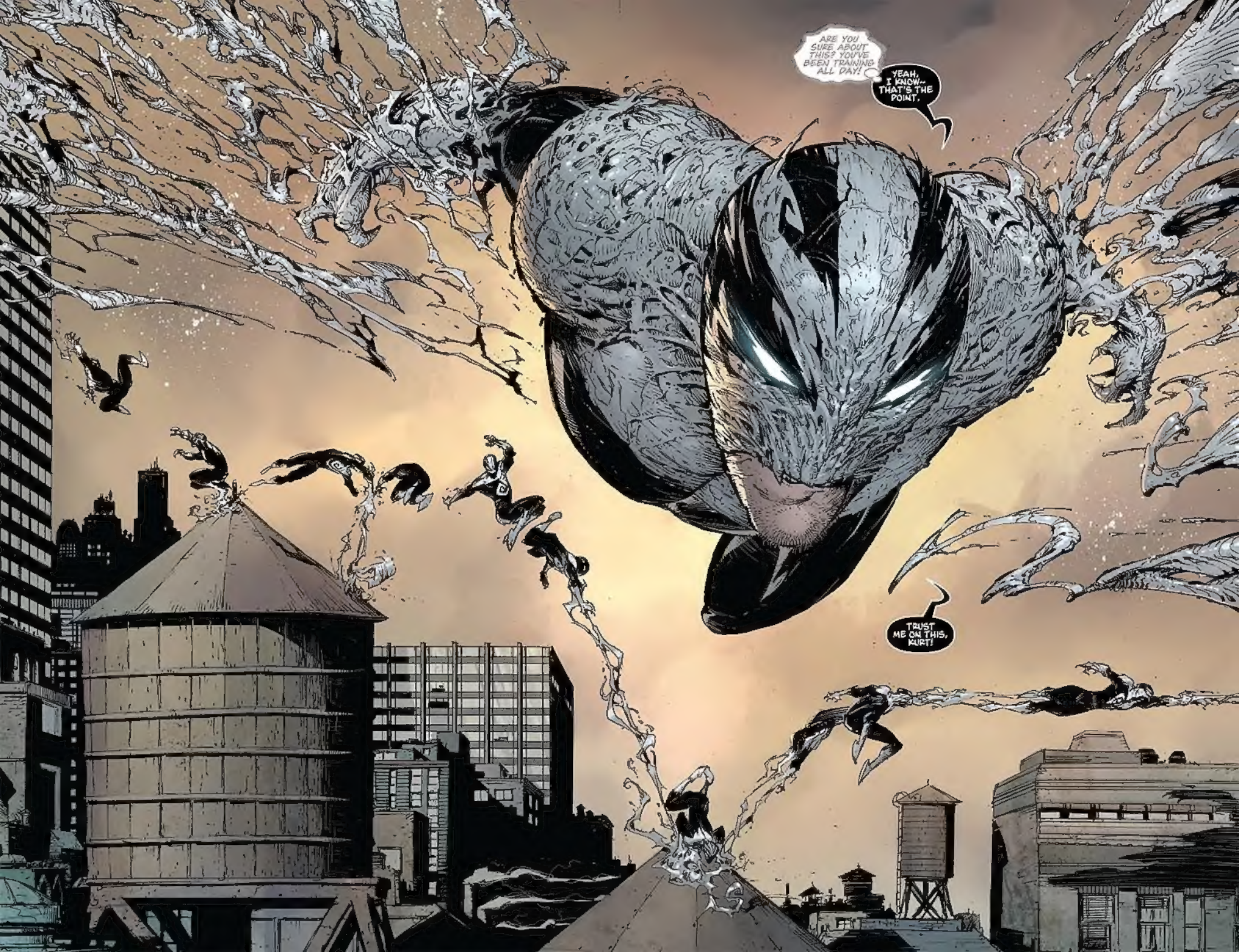
14 ITEMS OR FEWER
CANDY
WILL THAT BE ALL FOR YOU TODAY, MA'AM?
YES, THANK YOU. THAT'LL DO IT.
WELL THEN, THAT'LL BE $38.76.
WILL THAT BE CASH OR CHARGE?
...
UM... CHARGE.

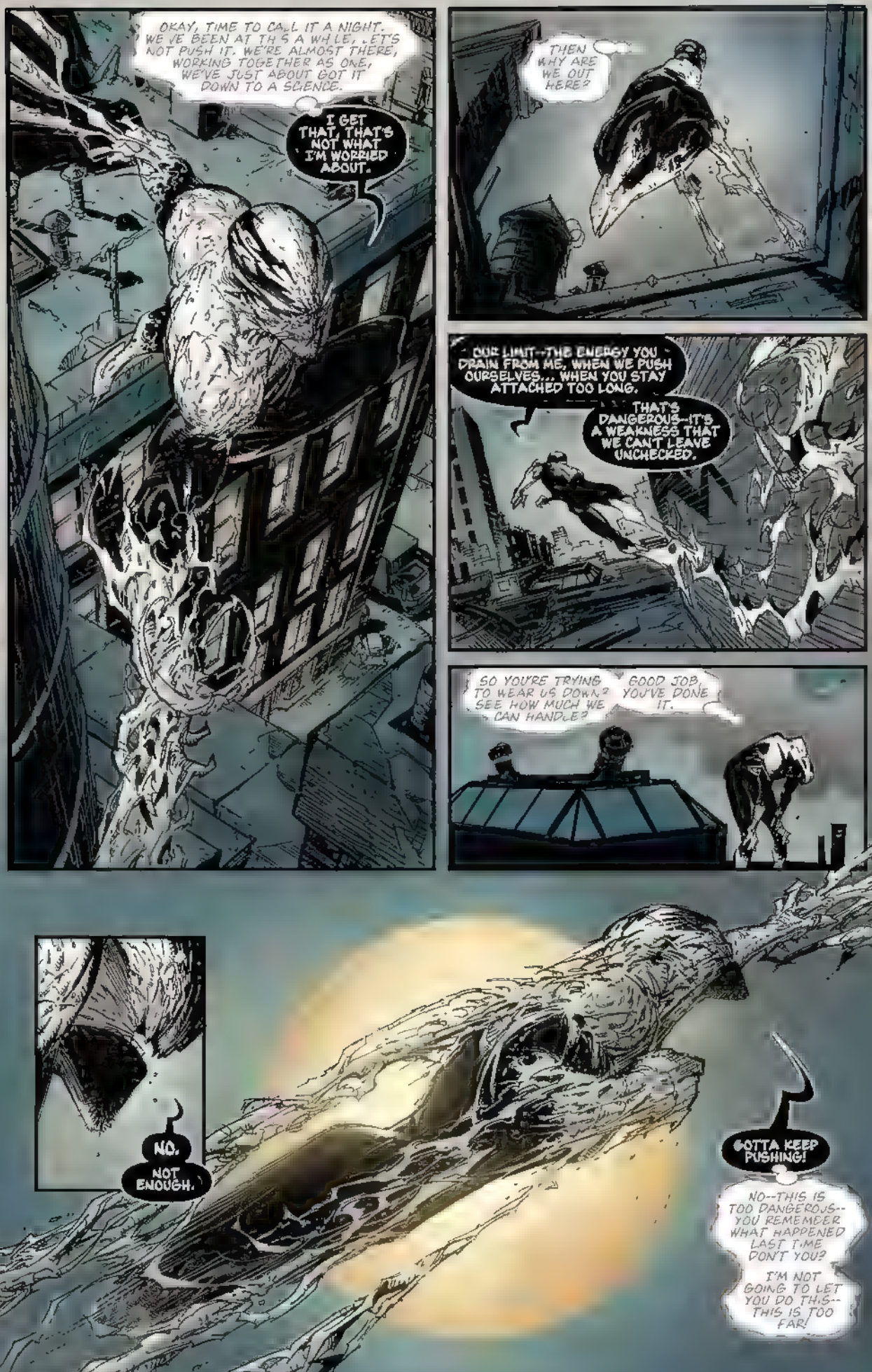
OKAY, FINALLY... THE FUN STUFF.
THIS IS SERIOUS, DANIEL. WE'RE GOING TO BE PUT INTO A LOT OF DANGEROUS SITUATIONS.
AND I'VE GOT YOU-- THE SUIT, THAT'S HOW I CAN DO THIS.
RIGHT, BUT THE MAN INSIDE THE SUIT--IF WE WHIP YOU INTO SHAPE, THINK ABOUT HOW EFFECTIVE WE'LL BE.
I GET IT, I GET IT.

I'M HERE, ALL RIGHT? I'VE DEVOTED MYSELF TO THIS...
...IT'S ALL I'VE GOT.
WEEKS, MONTHS, WHATEVER IT TAKES. I'LL READ WHAT THEY TELL ME TO, TRAIN HOW THEY TELL ME TO, I'LL DO WHATEVER I HAVE TO DO TO GET INTO SHAPE.
I KNOW YOU WILL.
I'M PROUD OF YOU, LITTLE BROTHER. YOU'RE BECOMING A BETTER MAN.
LET'S JUST HOPE IT DOESN'T KILL ME.
OH, BEING DEAD ISN'T THE WORST THING...

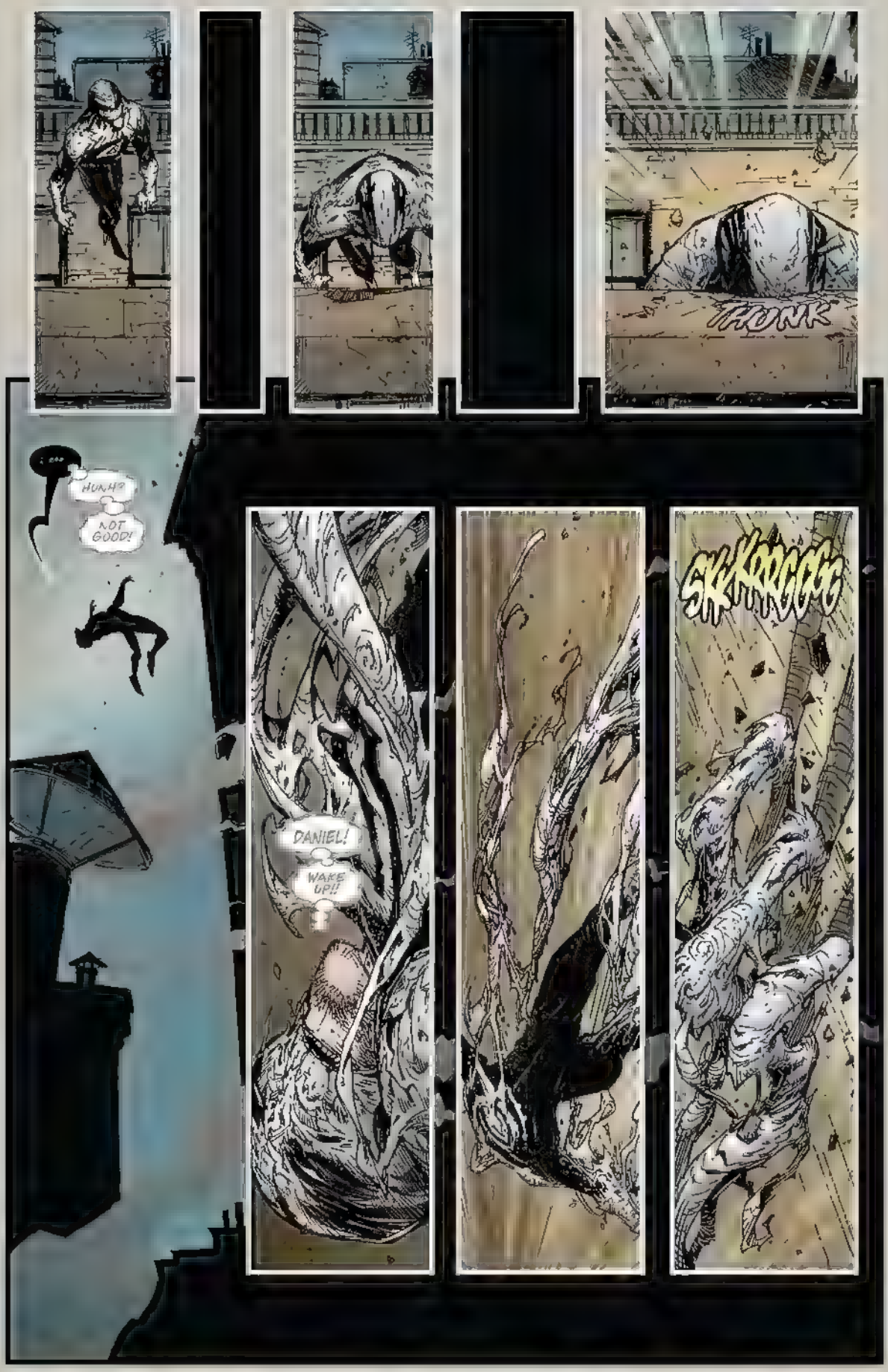

I'M DYING HERE... I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEEN THIS TIRED OR THIS SORE IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.
THESE PAST COUPLE MONTHS WOULD HAVE BEEN HARD ON ANYONE, DANIEL.
YOU'VE PULLED THROUGH WITH FLYING COLORS, MAN. IT'S TOTALLY IMPRESSIVE.
I'M SURE THERE ARE CHAIRS IN HERE SOMEWHERE.
SORRY... I JUST KIND OF...
...COLLAPSED.
WELL, GET UP... I'M NOT DRESSED FOR YOU TO BE ROLLING AROUND ON THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF ME, AND I HAVE NEWS.
NEWS YOU MIGHT WANT TO STAND FOR...
OH, YEAH... WHAT'S GOING ON?
WELL, I'VE GOTTEN WORD FROM HEADQUARTERS. EDWARD WILLIAMS' REPORT IS IN.
YOU'VE PASSED. YOUR STATUS AS FULL AGENT HAS JUST BEEN UPGRADED TO "ACTIVE."
WOW, THAT'S GREAT NEWS DIRECTOR TOSH.
THANKS.
DON'T THANK ME, YOU DID THE WORK.
NOW WE JUST NEED TO COME UP WITH A CODE NAME...

I'LL DEFINITELY BE THINKING ABOUT THAT...
I'VE GOT A FEW IDEAS.
NOBODY CARES.
SORRY, THAT WAS KURT.
AND *THAT'S* STILL GOING TO TAKE SOME GETTING USED TO.
REPORT TO BASE TOMORROW MORNING, WE'LL GET EVERYTHING SET UP FOR YOU.
I'LL SEE YOU THEN.
AND AGAIN, CONGRATULATIONS.
I PROMISE I WON'T SCREW THIS UP.
YOU PULLED IT OFF, KIDDO.
READY TO HEAD BACK, GET SOME REST BEFORE TOMORROW?
NO... I'M FAR TOO EXCITED FOR THAT.
I THINK NOW IT'S TIME FOR SOME *REAL* TRAINING...


ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS? YOU'VE BEEN TRAINING ALL DAY!
YEAH, I KNOW... THAT'S THE POINT.
TRUST ME ON THIS, KURT!


OKAY, TIME TO CALL IT A NIGHT. WE'VE BEEN AT THIS A WHILE, LET'S NOT PUSH IT. WE'RE ALMOST THERE, WORKING TOGETHER AS ONE, WE'VE JUST ABOUT GOT IT DOWN TO A SCIENCE.
I GET THAT, THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT.
THEN WHY ARE WE OUT HERE?
OUR LIMIT--THE ENERGY YOU DRAIN FROM ME, WHEN WE PUSH OURSELVES... WHEN YOU STAY ATTACHED TOO LONG.
THAT'S DANGEROUS--IT'S A WEAKNESS THAT WE CAN'T LEAVE UNCHECKED.
SO YOU'RE TRYING TO WEAR US DOWN? SEE HOW MUCH WE CAN HANDLE?
GOOD JOB, YOU'VE DONE IT.
NO. NOT ENOUGH.
GOTTA KEEP PUSHING!
NO--THIS IS TOO DANGEROUS-- YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME DON'T YOU?
I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU DO THIS-- THIS IS TOO FAR!

NO. IT'S NOT.
I'M GOING TO BE OUT THERE RISKING MY LIFE WITH YOU--I HAVE TO KNOW THE LIMIT..
I NEED TO KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO COME RIGHT TO THE EDGE OF IT--TO FEEL MY BODY SUCCUMB TO IT-- TO FEEL MYSELF DRIFT OFF.
I NEED TO KNOW THE EXACT--POINT-- WHERE I'VE PUSHED HARD ENOUGH--
THE EXACT--
OH, GOD! UGG--



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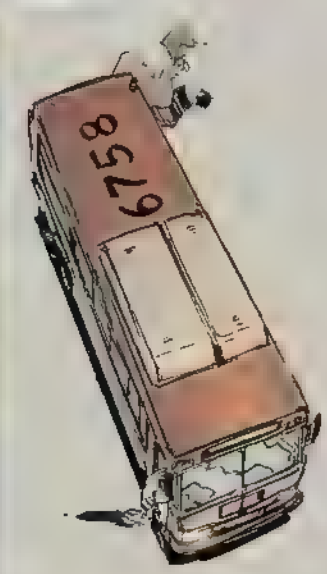
THWOMP
THUDD

HAPPY NOW?
THAT PART WHERE WE ALMOST DIED.. THAT WAS THE LIM.T.

DON'T BE SO RECKLESS NEXT TIME.

UGH...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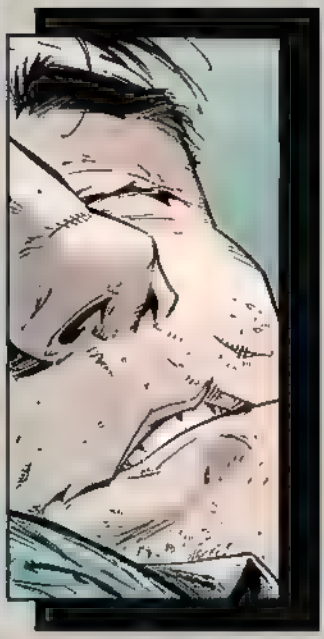
RECKLESS?
:HEHE
DON'T WORRY... I'VE LEARNED FROM THE BEST.



COBRA?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

LEAVING.
THE ONE WHO DID THIS TO MY FACE IS STILL OUT THERE. I'M TAKING A LEAVE OF ABSENCE.
I'M GOING AFTER HIM.
YOU KNOW I'VE INVESTED FAR TOO MUCH IN YOU AT THIS POINT...
... YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
EXCUSE ME?! YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP ME HERE?!
LIKE HELL I'M--
--HURRK!
KRAK
WRAMM

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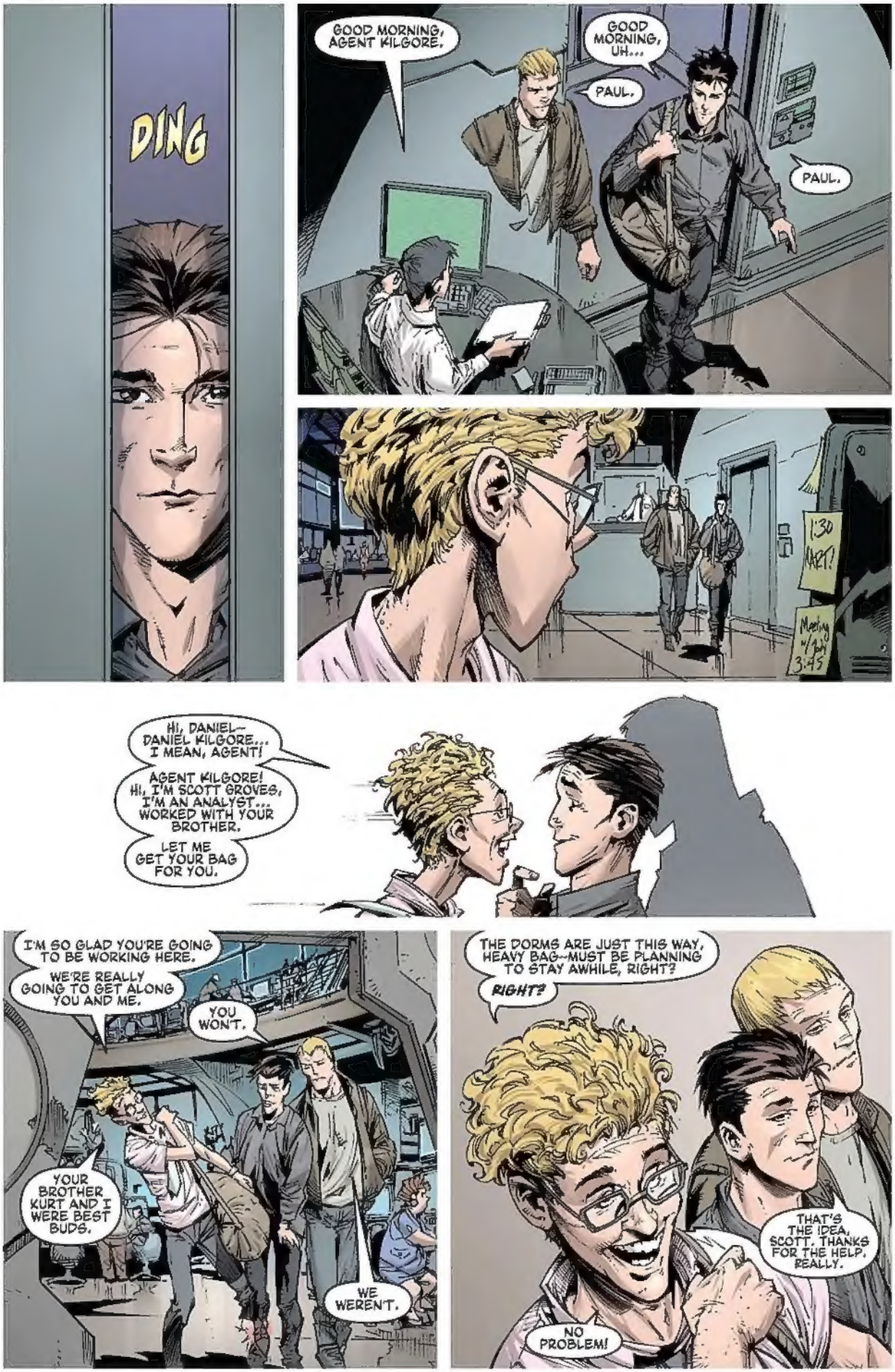
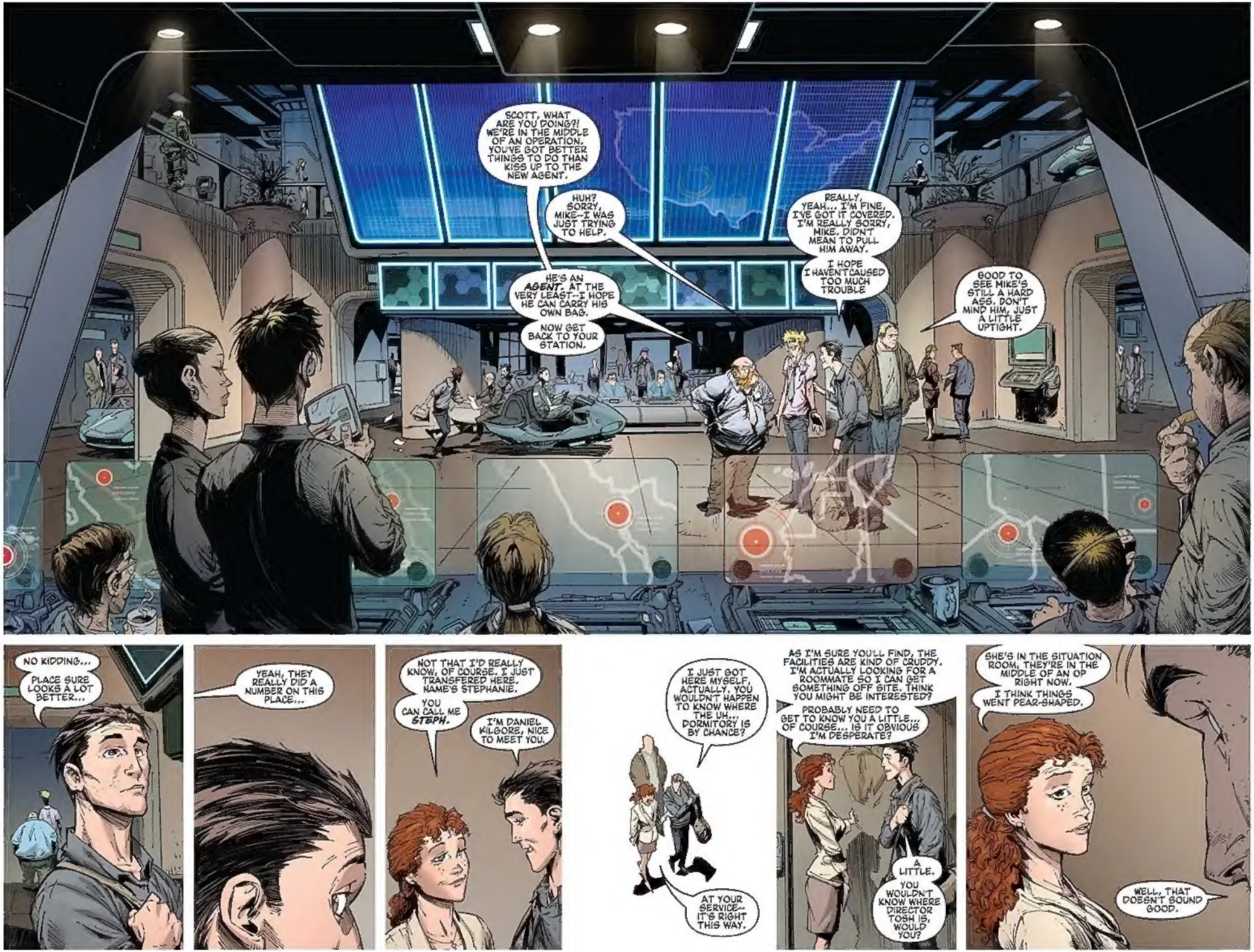
KLIK KLAK
BIG MISTAKE, HURG...
BIG MISTAKE.
YOU GET YOUR REVENGE WHEN I SAY YOU DO.
YOU BELONG TO ME.
NOW PUT THAT GUN AWAY BEFORE YOU EMBARRASS YOURSELF ANY FURTHER.


DING
GOOD MORNING, AGENT KILGORE.
GOOD MORNING, UH...
PAUL.
PAUL.
1:30 HART!
Meeting w/Jan 3:45
HI, DANIEL—DANIEL KILGORE... I MEAN, AGENT!
AGENT KILGORE! HI, I'M SCOTT GROVES, I'M AN ANALYST... WORKED WITH YOUR BROTHER.
LET ME GET YOUR BAG FOR YOU.
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE GOING TO BE WORKING HERE.
WE'RE REALLY GOING TO GET ALONG YOU AND ME.
YOU WON'T.
YOUR BROTHER KURT AND I WERE BEST BUDS.
WE WEREN'T.
THE DORMS ARE JUST THIS WAY, HEAVY BAG—MUST BE PLANNING TO STAY AWHILE, RIGHT?
RIGHT?
THAT'S THE IDEA, SCOTT. THANKS FOR THE HELP, REALLY.
NO PROBLEM!


SCOTT, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OPERATION. YOU'VE GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN KISS UP TO THE NEW AGENT.
HUH? SORRY, MIKE--I WAS JUST TRYING TO HELP.
HE'S AN AGENT. AT THE VERY LEAST--I HOPE HE CAN CARRY HIS OWN BAG.
NOW GET BACK TO YOUR STATION.
REALLY, YEAH... I'M FINE, I'VE GOT IT COVERED. I'M REALLY SORRY, MIKE. DIDN'T MEAN TO PULL HIM AWAY.
I HOPE I HAVEN'T CAUSED TOO MUCH TROUBLE
GOOD TO SEE MIKE'S STILL A HARD ASS. DON'T MIND HIM, JUST A LITTLE UPTIGHT.
NO KIDDING... PLACE SURE LOOKS A LOT BETTER...
YEAH, THEY REALLY DID A NUMBER ON THIS PLACE...
NOT THAT I'D REALLY KNOW, OF COURSE. I JUST TRANSFERED HERE. NAME'S STEPHANIE.
YOU CAN CALL ME STEPH.
I'M DANIEL KILGORE, NICE TO MEET YOU.
I JUST GOT HERE MYSELF, ACTUALLY. YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO KNOW WHERE THE UH... DORMITORY IS BY CHANCE?
AT YOUR SERVICE... IT'S RIGHT THIS WAY.
AS I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND, THE FACILITIES ARE KIND OF CRUDDY. I'M ACTUALLY LOOKING FOR A ROOMMATE SO I CAN GET SOMETHING OFF SITE. THINK YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED?
PROBABLY NEED TO GET TO KNOW YOU A LITTLE... OF COURSE... IS IT OBVIOUS I'M DESPERATE?
A LITTLE. YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WHERE DIRECTOR TOSH IS, WOULD YOU?
SHE'S IN THE SITUATION ROOM, THEY'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OP RIGHT NOW.
I THINK THINGS WENT PEAR-SHAPED.
WELL, THAT DOESN'T SOUND GOOD.

THE STRIKE TEAM DESCENDED ONTO THE LOCATION AT 0300 HOURS.
THEY'D TRACKED THIS LOCATION BECAUSE THEY'D BEEN GATHERING CHEMICALS AND EQUIPMENT LISTED IN WHAT LITTLE SHILLINGER'S NOTES WERE TRANSCRIBED BEFORE THE NOTEBOOK WAS STOLEN.
WHAT THEY FOUND HERE WAS A SMALL ARMY. OUR FIRST TEAM CALLED IN REINFORCEMENTS AT 0430 AND I RECEIVED A DISTRESS CALL FROM THAT TEAM AT 0500.
IT'S A WAR ZONE OUT HERE-- AND I'M GETTING NO RESPONSE FROM ANY OF OUR AGENTS ON THE INSIDE.

I HAVE TO ASSUME THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
WHATEVER IS INSIDE THERE, DIRECTOR--I KNOW I CAN'T HANDLE IT ON MY OWN.
I AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

WELL, DIRECTOR-- WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?
NOT MANY, THAT'S FOR SURE.
WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE PREPARED FOR THIS. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE THIS MANY AGENTS, NOT NOW... NOT EVER.
I CAN ONLY THINK OF ONE OPTION...

GET ME AGENT KILGORE...
...WE'RE SENDING IN HAUNT.